

THE SNOW QUEEN

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THE SNOW QUEEN

(FOUNDED ON HANS ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALE)

BY

LEONORA LOVEMAN.



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THE
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LIST OF CHARACTERS.

GRETA.

CARL.

GRANDMOTHER.

SNOW QUEEN.

MOTHER KINDIKEN.

PRINCE AND PRINCESS.

ROBBER GIRL.

ROBBER WOMAN.

ANNCHEN.

MARIE.

ROBBERS.

TWO CRANES.

FLOWERS. (DAHLIAS, ROSES, PEONIES.)

LACKEYS.

VILLAGE CHILDREN.

A BIRD COACHMAN.

BAH, a reindeer.

ACT I.

SCENE: The living room of a rich peasant. Right up stage is a hearth ; cooking utensils are suspended over the open fire. Right centre is a long table ; right down stage is the street door. Left up stage is the door into an adjoining room ; near the door is a cupboard with brightly flowered peasant dishes. Left centre is a long bench, before which stands a Christmas tree wrapped in a sheet. Left down stage is Carl's bed curtained. Down centre are an arm-chair and two stools. Back centre a great casement window opens to the floor. The lower panes are frosted, but through the upper panes a heavy snow storm is seen. Now and then, as it momentarily ceases, there is a view of a pointed church tower covered with snow. On either side of the window are rose trees in tubs. The room, lighted by candles, and a fire burning on the hearth, has an atmosphere of cheery homeliness. It is dusk of a winter afternoon.

When the Scene opens, Grandmother is seated in the arm-chair. She wears voluminous skirts, a white neckerchief, a white peasant cap with streamers, and a white apron over a black silk apron. She knits as she talks. Greta and Carl are seated on stools before her. Greta is a pretty little German girl, fair-haired, about ten years old. She wears a frilled apron, and a dress to her shoe-tops. Her hair, worn in long braids, is tied with bright ribbons. Short curls fall about her face. Carl is a dark-haired boy about eleven years old. He wears long trousers, a round-about jacket, a large collar, and a bright tie. Both children have flowered bowls containing popcorn, in their laps. Long pop-corn chains hang to the floor. They string the corn as they talk.

ACT I.

Grandmother. [*Knitting.*] And so, the Snow Queen came, and took the little girl to her great ice palace. Poor little girl, she shivered with cold !

Greta. [*Dropping her chain.*] Oh grandmother, is there really a Snow-queen ?

Grand. [*Nods impressively.*]

Carl. But where does she live ? Does she always stay in her ice palace ?

Grand. No, she flies all over the world, up to the dark clouds and down again. Sometimes you may see her where the snow is thickest. [*A great gust of wind blows heavily against the window.*]

Carl. [*Pointing.*] Out there, grandmother ? Is she out there ? [*Greta clings closer to grandmother.*]

Carl. [*Putting his hands on grandmother's knee.*] What had the little girl done ?

Grand. I told you she was naughty and selfish. Some of the enchanted mirror flew in her eyes, and a bit in her heart. So her heart had turned cold and hard like the Snow-queen's.

Greta. Oh, from the mirror that the wicked sprite made ?

Grand. Yes, the mirror that made all the good people look bad, and the beautiful things ugly.

Greta. [*Pointing to the rose bushes.*] Like our roses grandmother, would they look ugly?

Grand. Quite worm-eaten.

Greta. [*Triumphantly.*] I'm glad the mirror was smashed when he tried to see the beautiful angel!

Carl. [*Holding grandmother's dress.*] But where did the thousand and thousand of splinters go?

Grand. [*Sorrowfully.*] They are flying about yet. Big people see all wrong when they go in their eyes; and when they fly in naughty children's eyes and hearts, the children's hearts turn to ice like the Snow-queen.

Greta. [*Covering her eyes.*] Oh grandmother, I'm afraid!

Grand. [*Smoothing GRETA'S hair.*] You're not ever naughty. No, no, Greta!

Greta. [*Looking up at GRANDMOTHER.*] But, grandmother, why did the Snow-queen want the little girl?

Grand. She wanted children. The little girl had become cold and hard-hearted like herself.

Carl. [*Jumping up, digging his hands in his pockets.*] Ugh! I wouldn't be afraid! I'd put her on the stove if she came here. Then she'd melt. You're a 'fraid-cat. [*He pulls GRETA'S hair.*]

Greta. [*Jerking away.*] Carl!

Grand. [*Shaking her head.*] Always naughty, Carl, always naughty!

[*She rises and goes to look at clock.*]

Come now, quick! Give me the chains.
[*Going to tree.*] The playmates will be here soon.

[*She partly lifts the sheet.*]

Greta. [*Winding her chain about her neck and jumping up and down.*] See, Carl, see! It's a necklace now!

Carl. [*Holding up his chain.*] Mine is longer.

Greta. [*Unwinding hers and holding it up gleefully.*] No, mine!

[*CARL snatches GRETA'S chain.*]

Greta. [*Trying to seize it back.*] You're selfish, Carl, you always are!

Grand. Let me have them. Close your eyes while I put them on the tree. [*GRETA and CARL hold their hands over their eyes, GRANDMOTHER unwraps the tree at the back, and hangs on the chains. CARL tries to peep.*]

Greta. You're peeping.

Carl. I'm not. You are, or you wouldn't have seen me.

Grand. [*Covers the tree.*] Come help now, children.
[*Together they move the table towards front centre.*]

Grand. Set the table, Greta, while I get supper.
[*GRAND. busies herself about the hearth, GRETA brings brightly flowered peasant dishes from cupboard and arranges them on the table. CARL runs to the window.*]

Carl. My ! the church is all white. [*Running his fingers over the frosted window pane.*] Grandmother, does the Snow Queen make the ice flowers, too ?

Grand. She paints them as she passes.

Carl. [*Going towards centre.*] My ! I wish I could see her.

[*He takes a coin from his pocket, warms it at fire, then runs back to window, pressing it against the pane.*]

Carl. See, Greta, it makes a hole. I can look out.

Greta. [*Running to the window.*] Let's see !

Carl. [*Excited.*] Look there, Greta ! Look ! All spangled and shining ! [*He jumps up and down.*] Oh, it's the Snow-queen !

Greta. [*Looking.*] No ! It's just snow.

Carl. [*Pushing her aside and pointing.*] No ! there ! See her beckon !

[*He spreads his arms, pushing closer to the window.*] Look ! My ! but she's pretty ! [*He puts his eye against pane.*] Ugh !

[*He starts back towards centre turning towards front holding his hand over his eye.*]

Greta. [*Frightened.*] What is it ?

[*She throws her arms about him.*]

Carl. Something in my eye. [*Rubs his eye.*]

Greta. [*Taking his head in her hands.*] Let me see ! I don't see anything.

[*CARL pushes her aside and runs back to window.*]

Carl. [*Jumping up and down and pointing.*] There ! Greta, there ! [*Pointing.*] See her shine !

Greta. [*Following excited.*] Is she there ?

Carl. Yes. [*Pointing.*] Look ! [*He presses closer, then starts back holding his hand over his heart : looks pale, and turns back holding one hand over eyes, one hand over heart.*]

Greta. [*Clinging to him.*] Oh ! what is it, Carl ?

Grand. [*Terrified, coming forward.*] Is Carl hurt ?

Carl. Here, it hurts here. [*Rubs his eye.*] and here. [*Holds his hand over his heart.*]

[*GRANDMOTHER looks frightened, GRETA clings to CARL.*]

Grand. [*Bending over CARL, looking in his eye.*] I can't see anything.

Greta. Oh ! Carl, does it hurt much ? [*She sobs softly, holding his hands.*]

Carl. No. [*His face stiffens, suddenly he looks at GRETA angrily.*] No more. What're you crying for ? You're ugly when you cry. [*He slaps her.*]

Grand. Carl !

[GRETA stands back terrified, holding her hand over her face.]

Carl. Cry baby! [He struts about.]

Carl. [Kicking the tub of roses as he passes.]
Huh! [He pulls a rose and throws it on the ground.]

Greta. [Running up.] Don't, Carl!

Carl. I don't care. [He struts about looking defiant.]

Greta. [Picking up the rose.] It's so pretty, too!

Carl. It isn't, it's all worm-eaten. [He kicks the tub again, still holding one hand over his heart and rubbing his eye.]

[GRANDMOTHER holds up her hands frightened.
GRETA, noticing, goes to her, clings to her, and draws her front, whispering.]

Greta. Oh, grandmother, is it the glass, Carl has in his eye and in his heart? Will his heart turn cold and hard? Will the Snow Queen take him?

Grand. [Holding up her hand.] No, no! [She goes to CARL, once more looking in his eye.]

Carl. [Wriggling.] Don't, it's stopped hurting.

Grand. [Still looking, more cheerfully.] I can't see it.

Greta. [Jumps up and down pleased.]

[GRANDMOTHER [still looking thoughtful, goes back to fire.]

Carl. [*Looking out of the window, disappointed.*]
She's gone now.

Grand. Come, Carl. Supper's ready. [*She pours the soup into a dish and carries it to the table.*]

[*GRETA runs for a stool. GRANDMOTHER seats herself facing front. GRETA sits at her right.*]

Carl. My, I hope she'll come back! [*He seats himself opposite GRETA, holding out his plate.*]
Me first, grandmother.

Grand. You're naughty! Greta first. [*She helps herself and GRETA, then CARL. All eat fast breaking bread in their soup, bending low over their plates.*]

Carl. [*As he eats.*] Grandmother, where is the Snow Queen's palace?

Grand. Far, far, to the north, where it's bitter icy cold.

Carl. But how does she get there?

Grand. She flies in her gleaming sled.

Carl. [*Jumping up and down on his chair, and pushing his plate away.*] I wish she'd take me!

Greta. [*Frightened.*] Oh, no, Carl.

Carl. Wouldn't I just ride the white bears!

Greta. [*Running to CARL and clinging to him.*]
But you couldn't get back!

Carl. Ho! Fraid-cat! I'm not afraid!
[*Standing, his hands in his pockets, trying to look manly.*] I'd just hitch my sled to her's.
[*Lifting his arms.*] And we'd fly away.

Grand. [*Shaking her hand, rising and carrying the plates to the cupboard.*] No, no, Carl. It's icy there; you'd shiver all the long, long, days.

Greta. [*Shivering.*] How cold it must be!

Carl. Ugh! I shouldn't care.

[*Snow blows against the window. A heavy gust of wind shakes the house.*]

Greta. [*Running to GRANDMOTHER.*] Oh grandmother, is she coming?

Carl. [*Hesitates, then goes and stands by GRANDMOTHER, looking frightened.*]

Grand. No, no, it's just the wind and the snow. Listen! [*She raises her hand.*] The Christmas chimes!

[*Christmas chimes are heard faintly through wind growing louder.*]

[*GRANDMOTHER stands an instant with hand raised, head bowed, lips moving as if in prayer. The children cling to her looking up at her till the chimes stop.*]

Carl. [*As the sound ceases.*] Goody! Goody! Now they'll come. [*He runs to window.*]

Grand. Yes, quick! Help me, Greta.

[GRANDMOTHER and GRETA move the table back. GRETA puts on the cloth. GRANDMOTHER brings out cake, a pitcher of milk, and cups and puts them on the table.]

Carl. Ho! Ho! Christmas cakes! [He rubs his hands over his waistcoat.]

[Children's voices are heard outside singing.]

Greta. Here they are, grandmother! [She hops about excited.]

[The children are now heard just outside. The sound grows more and more distinct. They are heard singing "Holy Night."]

Children "Holy night, wonderful night, (*)
singing. Earth is still, blessed sight!"

[GRANDMOTHER hastily takes off the white apron, showing her black silk apron underneath.]

Children outside. "Only Mary, Mother mild."

[The sound has come close. A rap is heard at the door. GRETA and CARL run to GRANDMOTHER, standing by her.]

Grand. Open the door, Carl.

(*) "Holy Night," "The Fir and Pine," and the two songs sung by the flowers in Act II. are to be found, with the music, in "Rounds, Carols and Songs," for Schools and Kindergartens, published by Oliver Ditson, Boston, New York, Chicago. London: 192 High Holborn, W.C.

[CARL opens the door and the procession of girls and boys file in. All are muffled in coats and scarves covered with snow. They carry packages. At the head of the procession are two tiny girls. GRETA runs to them, leading them to the bench, left centre, where she takes off their wraps. Each older child, as he enters, goes to greet GRANDMOTHER. The boys take off their caps, nod, and shyly murmur: "Merry Christmas!" The girls bob and kiss GRANDMOTHER'S hand. After greeting GRANDMOTHER, each child goes to the bench to take off his wraps. CARL follows the first children.]

Greta. [Leading the tiny girls to the bench.]
Kiss me, Annchen. [She bends over her.]

Greta. Now, Clara.

[The second child puts her arm about GRETA'S neck. As the other children come to the bench, they are seen greeting CARL and GRETA; the girls giving a gift to GRETA, the boys to CARL. GRETA and CARL are seen exclaiming, hopping about, admiring their gifts. The little girls wear dresses to their shoe-tops, frilled aprons, hair tied with bright ribbons. The boys wear long trousers, waistcoats, round-about jackets, broad collars, and bright ties.]

As GRETA and CARL receive presents, GRANDMOTHER continues standing near front centre. She is heard welcoming each child.]

Grand. [To the first child.] A merry Christmas to you.

[*To the second child.*] God give you a happy Christmas.

[*When GRANDMOTHER has greeted all the children, she goes to the tree.*]

Grand. [*Standing by the tree.*] Come now, children.

[*The children rush towards the tree, rapidly forming a circle, GRETA leading the very little girls, and holding the hand of each.*]

[*GRANDMOTHER claps her hands. As she claps, the children take hands and prance about the tree, singing "The Fir and Pine." As the children sing, GRANDMOTHER takes off the sheet. Towards the front, on the tree is a large doll in a pillow; two smaller German dolls; red shoes; ginger-bread cats, dogs, men, frosted in pink and blue sugar; red apples; gilded nuts and apples; gold and silver cornucopias; the strings of pop-corn; bright ties and hair ribbons. A sled stands under the tree.*]

Children "The Fir and Pine, the Fir and Pine,
singing. I love them always dearly.
 How oft to me on Christmas night,
 The Fir and Pine have brought
 delight. . . ."

[*Suddenly the children stop singing, as tree is uncovered. GRANDMOTHER begins taking off the gifts. Shining powder is scattered over the*

tree, so that it has a sparkling appearance. The children nudge each other, point, and exclaim.]

Annchen. [Front centre.] How pretty !

Greta. [Pointing excitedly.] Red shoes !

[She claps her hands.]

Carl. [Front centre.] Look at the sled !

[GRANDMOTHER smiles and rapidly distributes the gifts ; the large doll and red shoes are for GRETA ; a smaller doll for each tiny girl ; the sled is for CARL ; a small gift for each other child. As they receive the gifts, the children are seen bobbing, exclaiming and thanking.]

Greta. [Hopping about excitedly, front centre.] Oh ! goody, goody ! Look at my red shoes ! Look at my doll !

Carl. [Running up and down with sled, front centre.] Ho ! look at my sled !

Annchen. [Running to GRETA.] Look at my dolly !

[GRETA smooths ANNCHEN'S hair.]

Marie. See mine !

[GRETA kisses her.]

[The girls crowd about GRETA, admiring.]

First Girl. Let me see !

Second Girl. Real hair, Greta ! My !

Third Girl. Let me hold her, Greta ?

[GRETA gives the doll to the girls, who pass it about ; and seats herself front centre trying on the red shoes. CARL has continued running up and down with his sled. The boys crowd about him, front.]

First Boy. My, a coaster !

Carl. [Excited.] Yes, wouldn't she slide down the snow mountains !

Second Boy. She's a fine one !

Third Boy. I've skates, see ! [He pulls them from his overcoat pocket. Towards back, at same time, all the children are seen moving about, admiring and showing their gifts. GRANDMOTHER carries about milk and cake. The children are seen munching cakes.]

GRETA carries cake and milk to ANNCHEN and CLARA, right front.

CARL drinks his milk fast and runs to GRANDMOTHER, front centre.]

Carl. More, grandmother !

Grand. No, wait.

[CARL makes a face and puts his glass down. He glances towards window ; then runs to it eagerly, dragging his sled with him, looking out.]

Carl. [Turning away disappointed.] I thought I saw her. He comes forward. As he passes

the table, he sees GRANDMOTHER'S spectacles, seizes them and puts them on, giggling ; then runs to front centre.] See !

[As GRANDMOTHER walks away, he swells himself out, clasps his hands, smiles like grandmother, and walks behind her imitating her. The boys gather about him, grinning slyly, and watching to see that grandmother doesn't turn. GRETA noticing, runs to CARL and takes away the spectacles.]

Carl. Ugh ! [He pulls her hair.]

Greta. [Stamping.] Carl !

Carl. [Swaggering.] I don't care ! I don't care !

[GRETA goes back to ANNCHEN and CLARA.]

Carl. [Taking a penny from his pocket, and running among children.] Come, let's play ! Button ! Button ! who's got the Button ? Come play ! Come play !

[The children gather about CARL. CARL seats himself left front, and the children form in a half circle towards the centre. A little girl passes the penny. As they play, CARL jumps up looking eagerly towards the window ; hops up and down, runs a few steps forward, then comes back. He seats himself looking disappointed. At the same time GRANDMOTHER straightens the room, and GRETA is heard talking to the tiny girls.]

Greta. [*Admiring ANNCHEN'S doll.*] What shall you call her, Annchen?

Annchen. Greta.

[*Again CARL starts, stares out of the window and turns back.*]

Marie. I shall call my Bunnie Greta.

Annchen. Our Bunnie died. Mother planted him. Now little bunnies will come up.

[*GRETA laughs and puts her arm about ANNCHEN.*]

Carl. [*Jumping up excitedly, and running toward window pointing.*] Look! Look!

Greta. [*Running to CARL.*] What do you see?

Carl. [*Pointing eagerly.*] Don't you see? there! there!

[*Snow blows heavily against the pane.*]

Grand. [*Coming forward.*] What is it, Carl?

Carl. [*More and more excited, running back towards centre.*] Can't you see, Greta, there! My! All white and shining!

Greta. [*Jumping up and down.*] Yes, [*pointing.*] Look!

[*All the children push toward the window.*]

Carl. [*Running nearer the window.*] Oh! Greta! Right in the thick snow!

[As he points, a slender woman wearing a sparkling white dress, a white cap, white scarf and white muff, is clearly seen nodding and beckoning just outside of window. She is brightly illuminated as if by moonlight. She fades quickly. As she beckons, CARL extends his arms, then shrinks back. GRANDMOTHER raises her arms, terrified. All the children crowd about GRANDMOTHER, looking frightened.]

Greta. [Holding GRANDMOTHER'S dress.] Grandmother! It's the Snow Queen!

Carl. [Running close to the window; disappointed.] She's gone!

Greta. [Running to CARL and pulling him back.] Carl, come back! She'll take you!

[The casement blows open and snow blows into the room. The children shrink back frightened.]

Carl. [Jumping up and down, looking gleeful.] It's the Snow Queen! I saw her! I saw her!

[The children look at GRANDMOTHER, bewildered.]

Grand. No. no. [She fastens the casement.] Just the snow shining in the moonlight. Listen! The curfew!

[Again the chimes are heard. The children bow their heads. GRANDMOTHER holds her hands above her eyes, and looks out fearfully.]

Grand. [*As the chimes cease.*] There! Now it's time for little folks to be a bed; come children.

[*She goes towards the bench and the children follow, hastily putting on their wraps, looking subdued and somewhat frightened. GRANDMOTHER helps them. CARL runs to the window, looking out. GRETA helps ANNCHEN and CLARA wrap up, centre.*]

Carl. I can't see her any more. She must be gone.

Grand. Come, Carl, say good-night.

[*CARL stands shyly by GRANDMOTHER. The children form in a procession. GRETA kisses ANNCHEN.*]

Greta. Good-night, Annchen.

[*She kisses CLARA.*] Good-night, Clara.

Grand. [*Opening the door.*] Good-night, children, God give you a happy Christmas.

Children. [*Marching towards the door.*] Good-night.

[*GRETA and CARL stand by GRANDMOTHER as the children file out. As they reach the door they stand and hesitate, looking timidly at GRANDMOTHER.*]

Grand. [*Smiling.*] Don't be frightened!

[*GRANDMOTHER, GRETA and CARL all stand by the open door an instant looking after them.*]

The children are heard singing, their voices growing less distinct.]

Children “ The Fir and Pine, the Fir and Pine,
singing. Are fresh and green for ever,
 Not only in the summer time,
 But mid the winter’s frost and
 rime. . . .”

[GRANDMOTHER closes the door and the sound comes faintly.]

“ But mid the winter’s frost and
rime. . . .”

[The wind drowns the song.]

Grand. [Bustling about, blowing out lights.] Now we must get to bed, children.

[GRETA straightens the room. CARL runs to the window.]

Grand. [Pulling back the curtains of CARL’S bed and showing the high, narrow, white bed.] Come, Carl.

Carl. [Looking out.] My ! How wet they’re getting !

Grand. [Putting her hand on CARL’S shoulder.] Come to bed, Carl. [CARL wriggles, still looking out.]

Greta. Grandmother, let us stay up to watch for Santa Claus !

Grand. No, no, to bed. Come, Carl.

[She leads CARL towards inner room. CARL breaks away and runs about teasingly.]

Grand. [Sternly.] Come !

[*She seizes CARL and leads him towards inner room. Coming back.*] Now, Greta.

Greta. Yes, I'm getting undressed.

[*She seats herself front centre taking off her red shoes. GRANDMOTHER unbuttons GRETA'S apron, then fastens the window casement, and puts out all the lights. The room is now only lighted by the fire.*]

Greta. [*Watching.*] Are you afraid, grandmother, the Snow Queen will come in?

Grand. No, she'll not come.

[*As she leaves the window, a high wind rattles the casement. GRANDMOTHER looks startled, and puts a chair against it. CARL enters from the inner room in his night-gown, and goes towards the bed.*]

Grand. Good-night, Carl. [*She tries to kiss him, but CARL wriggles past.*]

Greta. [*Running up.*] Good-night, Carl. [*She stoops to kiss him.*]

Carl. [*Pushing her away.*] I don't kiss girls.

Grand. For shame, Carl, to be so naughty, and on Christmas Eve.

Greta. [*Whispering loudly to CARL.*] I shall lie awake to watch for Santa Claus.

Carl. Ugh! I'd rather see the Snow Queen.

[*He climbs into bed.*]

Greta. [*Shivering.*] I'd be afraid she'd take me away!

Grand. Come Greta. [*They go into the inner room closing the door after them. The wind blows heavily against the window.*]

Carl. Ugh! [*He pulls up the covers. The wind rattles the casement. Sleigh-bells are heard.*]

Carl. What's that! [*He sits up and looks about frightened.*] May be it's the Snow Queen!—Yes!—She's coming! . . . [*He jumps out of bed; again the bells are heard.*]. I'll call grandmother! [*He runs towards the inner room. As he passes the open fire, he sees his shadow, and starts back. He looks about, terrified; then jumps on the bed, and pulls the covers over his head.*]

Voice. [*Heard outside.*] Gallop, Gallop!

[CARL sits up, trembling.]

Voice. On! higher!

[CARL dives under the covers.]

Voice. On! On!

[*The casement blows wide open, and snow blows in. The snow storm has ceased. Outside the window everything appears white and still. CARL peeps out; and dives under the covers.*]

The covers are seen shaking. As CARL covers his head, a small white sled appears in window. It seems to be made of shining ice, and is drawn by two white polar bears. On the high box sits a WHITE BIRD COACHMAN, holding whip and reins. On the seat is the woman in white, as first seen in the window. A bright light falls on the sled, making it stand out clearly. The woman enters. Her dress is covered with large white spangles that look like shining snow-flakes. She has a light step and moves about swiftly, beckoning, smiling. Her voice is low but distinctly heard.]

Snow-Queen. [Gasping and throwing off her white scarf.] It's hot here! I must be quick!

[She goes softly towards the bed, and looks at CARL, smiles, then bends over him, waving as if exerting a charm.]

Queen. [In a voice low at first, but growing steadily more penetrating.] Carl, Carl, Carl!

[CARL shakes violently under the covers.]

Queen. [Holding out her arms, speaking in an ingratiating voice.] Carl, come!

Carl. [In a voice stifled by fear.] Go way! Go way!

Queen. [Smiling, still waving, bending closer, her voice constantly becoming more enticing.] Come to my great ice palace, Carl; come slide down my snow mountains!

Carl. [*In a frightened voice.*] Grandmother !
Grandmother !

Queen. [*Bending closer, still waving.*] Come feed
my white birds !

Carl. [*Still under the covers, his voice more and
more frightened.*] Go way !

Queen. [*Bending closer, triumphantly.*] And ride
my white bears !

[CARL *peeping out cautiously, and diving swiftly
back.*] Bears ?

Queen. [*Smiling, putting her face close to CARL'S,
still waving.*] Yes ! Come hitch your sled behind
as I fly. Come, Carl. Are you afraid ?

Carl. [*Sitting up suddenly.*] I'm not ! [*In a
defiant tone.*] Ugh, you're pretty ! [*He shrinks
back, looking at her eagerly, still frightened.*] I'm
not afraid !

Queen. [*Smiles, still waving, stoops and puts her
arms about CARL.*]

Carl. [*Shivering.*] Ugh, you're cold ! [*He struggles
violently to free himself ; in high shriek.*] Grand-
mother ! Grandmother !

Queen. [*Kissing him.*] Now, are you cold ?

[CARL'S head drops drowsily. The QUEEN lifts
him and starts toward the sleigh.]

Carl. [*Murmuring drowsily.*] My new sled !

[The QUEEN laughs softly, picks up the sled, and
carries it with CARL to the sleigh. CARL'S

eyes close, his head falls back, he is sound asleep.]

Queen. [Seating herself in the sleigh, still holding CARL in her arms. In a soft voice] Home !

[The BIRD COACHMAN whips the bears. Again the snow falls heavily. The sled rapidly disappears. Snow has blown in on the floor. The white scarf of the SNOW QUEEN lies on the floor near CARL'S bed. The bed is tossed. The door of the inner room opens, and GRETA comes in, in a night-gown, followed by GRANDMOTHER in a dressing-gown, carrying a lighted candle.]

Greta. I know I heard Carl call !

Grand. It was the casement blowing open. How cold it is ! [She goes to window and closes it.]

Greta. [Turning to the bed.] Carl, didn't you call ?

[She stoops and looks terrified at the empty bed.]

Greta. [In a high frightened voice.] Grandmother !

[GRANDMOTHER hurries to her with the candle.]

Greta. [Sobbing.] Oh ! grandmother, Carl's gone !

[She clutches GRANDMOTHER'S gown.]

Grand. Carl, where are you ? [Looking about.] Are you hiding, Carl ?

Greta. [Crying.] Oh, no, grandmother, Carl's not here.

[GRANDMOTHER looks about bewildered. She sees the white scarf on the floor, and appears terrified.]

Greta. [Seeing the white scarf and running to it.] Grandmother, see! This is what the Snow Queen wore! [She stoops to pick it up, but drops it.] Ugh! It's icy!

[GRANDMOTHER stoops to pick the scarf up, but drops it shuddering. Suddenly she covers her face with her hands, sobbing.]

Greta. [Clinging to her.] Has the Snow Queen got Carl? Is that why you're crying? [Sobbing.] Oh, is it? Was it the glass Carl got in his eye and in his heart?

Grand. [Her face still covered.] Carl! My little Carl!

Greta. [Running to the window, stretching out her arms.] Carl, can't you hear me? Carl! [Turning towards GRANDMOTHER.] Grandmother, I'm going to look for Carl!

Grand. [Hurrying to her.] No, no!

Greta. [Reaching out her arms again.] I must, grandmother! I must go!

Grand. [Soothing her.] No, no, you can't find Carl in all the deep snow. Carl'll come home.

Greta. [Clinging to her.] When? Oh, when will he, grandmother?

Grand. [*Soothingly.*] When the snow's all gone.

Greta. [*Clinging to GRANDMOTHER, looking up at her.*] Oh, grandmother, will he come then? You said he couldn't. You said the Snow Queen would keep him. I must go, grandmother!

Grand. [*Putting her arms about GRETA.*] No! No!

Greta. [*Reaching out her arms.*] Carl! Grandmother, I'm going; I'm going to look for Carl!

[*As GRETA stands arms outstretched, GRANDMOTHER holding her back, a bright light from outside shines into the disordered room. The curtain falls.*]

ACT II.

SCENE : A garden enclosed by a high fence. A green floor cloth representing grass, covers the stage. Right up stage is a gable roofed house curiously painted pink and pale blue ; the gable is ornamented, on either end by a tall wooden soldier. Over the entrance door, hangs a cage with a canary bird. In the fence, right down stage, is a broad gate. Left down stage, near the fence, hangs a hammock bed. The left centre of the stage is occupied by a cherry tree covered with cherries. Under the tree stands a bench. Left up stage and centre extends a river bank.* Down centre left is a bed of roses ; down centre right a bed of peonies ; back centre right, near the river bank, a bed of dahlias. Greta is seen coming along river bank, in a boat.

Greta. [*Standing in the boat, waving to the wooden soldiers on the roof*]. Please come down ! Do stop it ! [*She looks at them anxiously*]. Oh dear, I don't believe they hear me. [*Calling more loudly.*] Please come !

[*The DAHLIAS sway and bend towards GRETA. The bird in the cage over the door sings loudly.*]

Mother Kindiken. [*Hurrying out of house.*] Dear, Dear ! [*She looks about bewildered. The bird sings more shrilly.*]

Greta. [*Holding out her arms.*] Please come stop my boat !

* The river bank can be easily represented by a piece of painted cardboard, tall enough to conceal the wheels of the barge representing Greta's boat.

Mother Kindiken. [*Holding her hand up to shield her eyes.*] I declare! A little girl! [*The boat glides on.*]

Greta. [*Covering her face with her hands.*] Oh! dear, Oh! dear! [*She sobs.*]

Mother Kindiken. There, there, don't cry. [*She hurries to the bank, supporting herself on a crooked cane. She wears a flowered chintz dress and a hat covered with flowers.*]

Mother Kindiken. [*Standing, looking at Greta.*] Who are you? How did you get here?

Greta. [*Rising, reaching out her arms.*] If you please, I'm Greta. I came to look for Carl. [*She tries to curtsy, but the boat rocks, and she falls back covering her face with her hands.*] Oh, please stop it!

Mother Kindiken. [*Draws the boat in with her crutch.* GRETA jumps out and stands shyly.]

Mother Kindiken. [*Smiling.*] So you came to look for Carl?

Greta. [*Curtsyng.*] If you please, have you seen Carl?

Mother Kindiken. [*Smiling.*] Come tell me about him. [*She goes towards the bench. GRETA follows. As she passes the DAHLIAS, GRETA stops to smell them and they bend toward her.*]

Greta. [*Clapping her hands.*] Oh, how beautiful!

Mother Kindiken. Pretty, an't they? [*She seats herself and motions to GRETA. GRETA comes up and stands by her, looking timid.*]

Mother Kindiken. [*Stroking GRETA'S hair.*]
Don't be frightened! See here! [*She shakes the
cherry tree and brings down a shower of cherries.*]

Greta. How many! [*She stands holding her
dress as they fall, then runs about picking them up.*
MOTHER KINDIKEN laughs and seats herself on
the bench. *GRETA* goes to her, holding up her dress,
with the cherries.]

Greta. If you please, where shall I put them?

Mother Kindiken. [*Smiling, drawing up a stool.*]
Sit here and eat them. [*GRETA seats herself eating
the cherries.*]

Mother Kindiken. [*Watching GRETA.*] Why did
you come here to look for Carl?

Greta. [*Troubled.*] I offered the river my red
shoes to take me to Carl. Then I got in the boat
and it brought me here.

Mother Kindiken. Is Carl your brother?

Greta. Yes, that the Snow Queen took to her
palace, over rivers and hills. We thought when
the snow had gone he'd come home. But he
didn't. [*Rubbing her hand over her eyes.*] I must
go. [*Rising and putting the cherries on bench.*]

Mother Kindiken. No, no, you shall wait here
for Carl. I'm fond of little girls!

Greta. [*Moving further away.*] I must go look
for Carl.

Mother Kindiken. Carl will come.

Greta. [*Astonished.*] Will he ?

Mother Kindiken. [*Waving her crutch.*] The river'll bring Carl.

Greta. [*Jumping up and clapping her hands.*] Will it, oh, will it bring Carl ?

Mother Kindiken. Yes, wait and see. Now you rest while I bring you some supper. [*She goes to the hammock-bed.*]

Greta. [*Following, seating herself.*] Why ! it swings ! [*She swings.*]

Mother Kindiken. Smell the cushions.

Greta. [*Bending over the cushions.*] Violets ! They're stuffed with violets !

[*She lies down burying her head in the cushions.*
MOTHER KINDIKEN glancing at her, hurries down to the boat. Turning back she watches to see that GRETA isn't looking ; then hastily drags the boat nearer the bank and fastens it with a heavy chain.]

Greta. [*Swinging.*] It smells so good.

Mother Kindiken. [*Coming back.*] Yes. Feel the covers.

Greta. [*Feeling them.*] Rose leaves ! My !

Mother Kindiken. Wait, I'll cover you.

[*She throws the covers over GRETA.*]

Greta. How soft they feel.

[*She rubs them over her cheek, laughs ; and again buries her head in the cushions. MOTHER KINDIKEN again looking at GRETA to see she doesn't notice, goes hastily to the gate. She fastens the latch and tries it to see if it holds ; then returns to GRETA.*]

Mother Kindiken. Now I'll get you some supper.

Greta. [*Drowsily swaying back and forth.*] How the wind sings !

Mother Kindiken. [*Murmuring.*] She'll sleep.

[*MOTHER KINDIKEN nods, looking satisfied, then goes quickly towards the house. As the house door closes after her, the bird sings loudly. As he sings, one by one the ROSES drop back their petals* showing children's faces beneath.*]

First Rose. [*Moving close with a swift trembling movement, peeping over at GRETA.*] She's asleep !

Second Rose. [*Moving closer, bending over GRETA.*] Come and play, little girl.

All the Roses. [*Moving closer, whispering.*] Come, play ! Come, play !

Greta. [*Looking up astonished.*] What !

Roses. [*Swaying back and forth.*] Come and play ! Come and play !

* The petals about the faces of the children could be manipulated by a cord that the children loosen when the petals fall back and draw tight when the petals close.

Greta. [*Jumping up.*] Oh, you can talk!

First Rose. [*Furtively glancing back towards the house and partly drawing up her petals.*
Hush! only when we're alone.

[*All the ROSES hurriedly peep and partly draw up their petals.*]

Second Rose. We talk when we're alone.

[*The bird continues singing loudly.*]

Greta. [*Jumping up, clapping her hands, running in among the ROSES.*] How pretty you are.

[*The ROSES giggle softly, and form a circle about Greta. The PEONIES move forward with a swaying movement and form a circle about the ROSES; the DAHLIAS move forward with the same swaying movement and form a circle outside the PEONIES. All circle rapidly about GRETA, nodding, swaying, dancing to the music and singing.*]

“Come, come, come! One and all, to our call
Through the meadow grasses tall,
Glad and free, here you see, merry hearts
have we.

Who'll not gladly come and play, foolishly
at home may stay,

While we sing, dance and spring, let the
echoes ring!”

[*GRETA turns from one to the other, at first bewildered, then laughing and trying to catch them in her arms as they elude her and circle past.*]

Suddenly the bird stops singing, the flowers glance furtively towards the house, stop circling, draw up their petals, move swiftly to their beds and stand stiffly as before.

GRETA stands looking after them wondering, as the door opens, and MOTHER KINDIKEN comes out carrying a bowl and spoon.]

Mother Kindiken. I thought I heard you talking.

Greta. [Hesitating.] I was playing with the flowers.

Mother Kindiken. Pretty an't they. Well, now come have your supper.

[*She carries the bowl to the bench. GRETA follows her and seats herself, obediently taking the bowl and looking up at MOTHER KINDIKEN.*]

Greta. I never saw such flowers.

[*She glances towards the ROSES ; they nod slightly ; and GRETA laughs.*]

Mother Kindiken. There an't any others like them. Now you eat your bread and milk, then you can rest till I get back.

Greta. [Troubled.] Are you going away ?

Mother Kindiken. I must put my other flowers to bed.

Greta. Have you more ?

[MOTHER KINDIKEN nods.]

Greta. [Thoughtfully.] Are they far away ? Will you ask if anybody's seen Carl ?

Mother Kindiken. [*Stooping and smoothing GRETA'S hair.*] Yes, I'll ask.

Greta. [*Rising and looking up wistfully.*] Shan't I come too ?

Mother Kindiken. No, no, you stay here.

Greta. [*Timidly.*] Shall you be gone long ?

Mother Kindiken. Not very long. Eat your supper, then you can rest. I'll ask about Carl.

[*She strokes GRETA'S cheek and goes into the house.*

GRETA sits, looking after her. The house door is heard being loudly locked and bolted from within. When the sound ceases, the bird begins swaying on his perch and singing shrilly. GRETA goes closer to the bird, and looks at him, then turns back and looks at the river.]

Greta. Oh ! I hope Carl'll come soon !

[*She sighs, sits on the bench, and slowly eats the bread and milk. As the bird sings, the flowers gradually drop back their petals, the ROSES turning towards GRETA.*]

First Rose. [*Bending towards GRETA.*] She's gone. Now, come and play.

Second Rose. Yes, come play !

Greta. [*Jumping up and throwing her arms about FIRST ROSE.*] I'm glad you can talk. It isn't so lonely.

Second Rose. Stay with us ! Mother Kindiken wants a little girl.

Greta. [*Shaking her head and laughing.*] No, no, I must look for Carl.

Second Rose. [*Bending closer to GRETA.*] Don't go! Come, live with us! Be a flower too!

Greta. [*Startled.*] Oh! were you once little girls?

[*The ROSES giggle.*]

Second Rose. We are flowers!

First Rose. We're just flowers. We like it here in the sun.

Greta. [*Wonderingly.*] May be she will want me to be a flower, too? I must go before she comes.

[*GRETA runs to the boat and tries to draw it towards her, but finds it chained.*]

Greta. [*Uneasily.*] Oh, dear, I can't get it loose.

The Dahlias. [*Bending towards her.*] Don't go!

Greta. I must! [*She runs hastily to the gate and finds it locked.*] That's fastened too! Oh! dear, what shall I do? [*She looks about perplexed, then goes slowly back to the bench and sits, sobbing softly.*]

First Rose. [*Bending towards her.*] Why don't you come and play?

Greta. [*Looking up.*] She's locked me in.

Second Rose. Stay with us, do stay!

Greta. [*Jumping up.*] No, no, I must go. How can I get out. [*Looking about.*] It's growing dark, too. I shan't find my way.

First Rose. [*Softly.*] The sun is setting.

Second Rose. [*Sleepily.*] The sun's setting. We must go to sleep.

[*The ROSES are seen whispering to each other and drawing up their petals.*]

Greta. [*Frightened.*] Please don't go to sleep.

Peonies. [*Drawing up their petals, singing softly.*]

"Now the sun is setting in the golden west. . . ."

[*GRETA turns towards the PEONIES looking troubled.*]

Roses. [*Petals drawn up, swaying drowsily in time to tune.*]

"Birds and bees, and children, all have gone to rest. . . ."

Greta. [*More and more troubled.*] Oh, please don't all go to sleep and leave me here alone!

Dahlias. [*Drawing up their petals and singing.*]

"And the merry streamlet as it runs along. . . ."

[*GRETA turns to DAHLIAS, looking distressed, then once more tugs desperately at the boat.*]

All the flowers. [*Together, as they swing swaying gently to the music.*]

"With a voice of sweetness, sings its evening song."

[As they stop singing, they stand in their beds motionless, petals drawn up. The stage has grown darker.]

Greta. *[Running from bed to bed.]* Now they've all gone to sleep. How dark it is! Oh, how shall I get out!

[She runs to the house door, tries it, and finding it locked, goes back to the bench, seats herself, her head in her arms, sobbing. The moon is seen rising, illuminating the bank. A CRANE is seen climbing over the bank. He comes forward, flapping his wings, but pauses suddenly when he sees GRETA; then stands looking at her, turning his head from side to side.]

Crane. *[Speaking suddenly in a guttural voice.]*
Goo day, goo day!

Greta. *[Jumping up, drying her eyes with her hand.]*
Oh! good evening. When did you come?

Crane. *[Still looking at her, inquisitively turning his head from side to side.]*

Crane. You're crying. What makes you cry?

Greta. The boat is chained, see! *[She runs to the boat and tugs at the chain.]* And this gate is locked! *[She runs back to the gate and tries the latch.]* I can't get out!

Crane. *Hm!* *[He stalks to the gate looking extremely dignified.]* Is that all? *[He pushes the latch with his beak, turning with pride, as the gate flies open.]* See!

Greta. [*Jumping up and down excited.*] Oh! thank you, thank you. Now I can go and look for Carl!

Crane. [*Looking at her inquisitively.*] Who's Carl?

Greta. My brother, that the Snow Queen took away. [*Going closer.*] Have you seen Carl?

Crane. [*Cocking his head proudly.*] Does he look like you?

Greta. He's bigger than me; and his hair's all brown and curling.

Crane. [*Nods impressively.*] Does he carry a bundle?

Greta. [*Shaking her head.*] No, no bundle. [*Hopping about the CRANE excitedly.*] Oh! yes, his sled, it must have been his sled!

Crane. [*Nodding.*] May be! I couldn't see well in the crowd.

Greta. [*Clapping her hands.*] Oh! have you seen Carl! [*Running to the CRANE and throwing her arms about him.*] Oh, you, dear Crane, where did you see Carl? Oh, where is Carl? [*She squeezes the CRANE harder as she speaks.*]

Crane. [*Freeing himself.*] Don't, you ruffle my feathers.

Greta. [*Jumping up and down with impatience.*] But where's Carl?

Crane. With the Princess, to be sure!

Greta. [*Astonished.*] With the Princess ! Did you see Carl with a princess ?

Crane. No ; my sweetheart did. She's a tame Crane. She's engaged at Court. [*Flapping his wings.*] I'm a wild Crane !

Greta. [*Jumping up and down clapping her hands.*] Oh, grandmother'll be so glad Carl's living with a princess. Did the princess marry Carl ? Is Carl a prince ?

Crane. [*Looking away disdainfully.*] How many questions you ask ! Can you talk Crane's talk ?

Greta. [*Shakes her head.*] No. Grandmother can.

[*The CRANE walks away.*]

Greta. [*Running after him and stroking him.*] Oh, dear Crane, I understand you. Please tell me about Carl. Did the princess marry Carl ? Why did the princess marry Carl ?

Crane. [*Turning back.*] Well, you see, she wanted a clever prince.

Greta. [*Nodding earnestly.*] Yes, and Carl's so clever !

Crane. And a prince that wasn't frightened of the lackeys.

Greta. [*Shaking her head.*] Carl never was afraid.

Crane. And the others who came to marry her were all so frightened.

Greta. Were there so many ?

Crane. [*Impressively.*] Crowds and crowds ! But they couldn't talk, they were so scared when they saw the lackeys.

Greta. [*Wonderingly.*] Why ?

Crane. [*Disdainfully.*] Don't you know ? The lackeys're so grand ! They wear scarlet plush and gold lace and silver lace ! They're so splendid and fine and tall ! But the Prince wasn't scared. He just walked right in, with his bundle on his back.

Greta. [*Who has been listening excitedly.*] His sled, you mean.

Crane. [*Severely.*] Don't interrupt. And there sat the princess on a big white pearl, big as this ! [*Spreads his wings and whirls round.*]

Greta. [*Holding up her hands.*] My !

Crane. [*Nodding.*] Yes, and he answered all the questions.

Greta. [*Jumping up and down clapping her hands.*] That was Carl ! I know it was. He's as clever ! He can read,—just anything ; and do sums in his head ! And he's never scared. Why, he wasn't afraid of the Snow Queen !

Crane. Hum ! it must be Carl !

Greta. Oh, yes ! Dear Crane, please take me to Carl ! [*Stroking him timidly.*]

Crane. [*Scornfully.*] Why, the lackeys wouldn't let you in.

Greta. [*Laughing.*] That doesn't matter. Carl'll take me in !

Crane. Hum, hum. Think so? I can ask my sweetheart. She'll know.

Greta. Oh, yes, [*Nodding*] she's at Court.

Crane. [*Proudly.*] She's lady in waiting to the princess.

Greta. [*Hopping up and down.*] Oh, then she'll take me in. [*Thinking.*] May be she'd like my red shoes! [*She sits down and takes them off. As they talk, the moonlight has grown brighter, so the stage is clearly lighted.*]

Greta. [*Carrying her red shoes to the CRANE.*] Please take them to her, and ask her to take me to see Carl.

[*The CRANE slowly puts his feet into the red shoes and walks away with them awkwardly.*]

Crane. [*Looking back.*] Wait here.

Greta. [*Timidly.*] But it's so dark. I'm afraid Mother Kindiken will come back.

[*The CRANE walks on and disappears over the bank.*]

Greta. [*Wandering about the garden looking frightened.*] How dark it is! [*She hears a sound and stands listening, then runs to the gate and looks out.*] I don't see Mother Kindiken. Oh, dear, I hope she won't come. She'd never let me go if she wants a little girl! [*She goes back towards the bench, hears a sound and stands listening. The*

CRANE is now seen returning over the bank. He flaps his wings excitedly. GRETA runs to meet him.]

Greta. Can I see Carl?

Crane. My sweetheart likes the red shoes. [Pleased.] They're very pretty.

Greta. [Impatiently.] Yes, but Carl! [Clasping her hands before her.] Oh! can I see Carl?

Crane. And she says the prince and princess are coming to see the garden.

Greta. [Jumping up and down excitedly.] Here! here! here! Oh! goody, goody!

Crane. They're on the river. They'll come.

Greta. Oh! dear Crane! [Throwing her arms about him.] How good you are!

Crane. [Bored.] Well; you rest now. [He nods towards the bed.]

Greta. I'm so afraid Mother Kindiken will come.

Crane. I'll watch.

[GRETA looks about timidly, and then goes and lies on the hammock-bed. The CRANE walks up and down stiffly, as if mounting guard. Lights are seen over the river bank.]

Greta. [Sitting up and looking about excitedly.] Are they coming?

Crane. No, wait.

[GRETA drops back wearily, and sleeps. A sound is heard as of soft singing, in the distance. Very slowly a lighted barge comes into sight, The PRINCE and PRINCESS are seen seated in front. The tame CRANE is perched on the front. LACKEYS in scarlet plush and in gold and silver lace are seen standing stiffly holding up lanterns. As the barge draws up at the bank, the LACKEYS jump out and assist the PRINCE and PRINCESS to land, walking backwards before them. The stage becomes brightly lighted. The tame CRANE is seen wearing the red shoes. She carries a fan, and walks very primly near the PRINCESS. The wild CRANE approaches the PRINCESS and bows profoundly. The PRINCE walks about the garden; a LACKEY follows with a lantern. The PRINCE remains in the shadow, his back to the bed, and is seen talking to the lackey. The PRINCESS walks towards the hammock-bed, stopping when she sees GRETA.]

Princess. [Astonished.] Why, here's a little girl! What a pretty little girl!

[GRETA sits up rubbing her eyes.]

Wild Crane. [Whispering to GRETA.] It's the princess. Make your curtsy.

[GRETA jumps off the hammock-bed and makes a deep curtsy. The PRINCESS strokes her hair.]

Greta. [Looking up, clasping her hands.] May I please. . . .

Wild Crane. [*Whispering.*] Say: Your Majesty.

Greta. If you please, Your Majesty, where's Carl?

Princess. [*Astonished.*] Carl! Oh, I see, my lady in waiting told me. You're the little girl who is looking for her brother.

Greta. [*Rising.*] Yes, Carl. [*She looks about puzzled, then seeing the PRINCE, clasps her hands as she runs toward him.*]

Greta. Carl! [*Holding out her arms.*] Carl!

[*The PRINCE comes forward and stands looking at GRETA, astonished.*]

Greta. Carl!

[*She runs closer, stands an instant looking at him, her arms dropped at her side, by her attitude keenly disappointed; then turns suddenly away, coming back down centre, sits on the ground, sobbing, her head in her arms.*]

Princess. [*Bending over GRETA.*] What is it, little girl?

Greta. [*Sobbing.*] It isn't Carl.

[*The PRINCE and PRINCESS stand beside GRETA, looking astonished.*]

Tame Crane. [*Coming forward making a curtsy.*] She thought His Majesty was her brother.

Princess. Oh, the poor little girl!

Prince. And she came all this way alone, to look for him, the brave little girl!

Princess. [*Stroking GRETA'S hair.*] Don't cry. You shall come and live with me.

Greta. [*Rising.*] No, no !

Princess. [*Holding out her arms.*] You shall live at the palace, and have a beautiful white pony to ride.

Greta. [*Moving away.*] Oh, no, may it please Your Majesty, I must go look for Carl ! [*Looking towards the gate.*] Mother Kindiken'll come. I must go now ! I must go to the Snow Queen's palace !

Prince. [*Approving.*] The good little girl ! But it's a long, long way, to the Snow Queen's palace. How can she go alone ?

Princess. The good sweet child ! Don't you see she has the power of a good child ! Everybody will aid her ! It's because she is so brave and loving, she can help Carl.

Greta. [*Thinking, then kneeling before the PRINCESS.*] If you please, Your Majesty, if I might have a carriage, or a pony to ride. Grand-mother says it's far over woods and hills ; [*Rising and looking at her bare feet.*] and a pair of boots.

Prince. [*Sympathetically.*] She's bare-foot, too !

[*The Tame CRANE turns away embarrassed.*]

Princess. [*Suddenly clapping her hands.*] You shall ! You shall ! [*She motions to the tame*

CRANE and to a LACKEY and whispers to them.
Aloud, as they turn away.] Make haste!

*[The TAME CRANE and LACKEY are seen hurrying
out of gate.]*

Princess. Now come sit by me, little girl, and
tell me how the Snow Queen carried away Carl.

*[She seats herself on the bench. The PRINCE sits
beside her. GRETA stands before them. The
LACKEYS and WILD CRANE come closer.]*

Greta. It was Christmas Eve.

[The PRINCE and PRINCESS nod.]

Greta. She came in her sled and carried Carl
off.

Princess. *[Indignantly.]* I'm sure she shouldn't!
How very unkind!

Greta. *[Shaking her head mournfully.]* We
waited and waited. We put the roses out. The
snow was all gone. *[GRETA spreads her arms.]*

Prince. *[Sympathetically.]* And Carl didn't
come?

[GRETA shakes her head sorrowfully.]

Princess. Poor little girl!

Greta. And now Grandmother's all alone.

[GRETA rubs her eyes with her hands. Wheels are heard. GRETA turns towards the gate, and listens.]

Greta. It's Mother Kindiken! Oh, dear, oh, dear, what shall I do? [She leans back against the PRINCESS. The PRINCESS smiles. The sound comes closer.]

Greta. [Looking terrified.] Oh, she won't let me go. What shall I do!

Prince. [Smiling.] Go see what it is.

[GRETA runs to the gate, looking out, then jumps about clapping her hands.]

Greta. Oh, how beautiful! [Running back to the PRINCESS.] How beautiful it is!

[The LACKEYS are seen entering, drawing a golden chariot. Fruit, cakes, and hams are loaded at the back, under the seat, and fastened at the sides. The TAME CRANE is on the seat carrying boots, a fur cap, a muff, and coat and gloves. The PRINCE and PRINCESS rise smiling.]

Princess. [Going to GRETA.] All for you.

[GRETA runs to PRINCESS kissing her hands, then kisses the hand of the PRINCE. The PRINCESS beckons the TAME CRANE, who brings the clothes to GRETA.]

Greta. Oh! thank you. [*Skippping about.*] How beautiful!

[*She sits on the ground and puts on her boots.*]

Princess. Now she'll be nice and warm.

[*All gather close and stand about looking at GRETA, the LACKEYS still lighting scene with lanterns.*]

Prince. Yes, it's cold where the Snow Queen lives.

[*The PRINCE and PRINCESS help GRETA on with her wraps. The TAME CRANE and the WILD CRANE are seen whispering.*]

Princess. Now you're quite ready.

Greta. [*Dancing up and down admiring her clothes.*] Oh! yes. How good everybody is!

[*Suddenly she kneels again before the PRINCESS, kissing her hand.*]

Princess. [*Stroking GRETA'S hair.*] What is it? Have you another wish?

Greta. [*Looking up.*] If you please, the Crane's been very kind; may he go part way?

[*The PRINCESS nods and smiles. The WILD CRANE makes a deep curtsy, then walks with dignity to the chariot placing himself on the seat. GRETA goes closer to the PRINCESS.*]

Princess. [*Putting her arms about GRETA.*] Good-bye! Find Carl!

[*She kisses GRETA and leads her to the chariot. The PRINCE helps GRETA up.*]

Greta. [*Stands in the chariot leaning out.*] Good-bye! Good-bye!

[*The PRINCESS reaches up, and strokes GRETA'S check. On the other side of the chariot, the TAME CRANE and the WILD CRANE are seen rubbing beaks.*]

Princess. Off now.

[*She raises her hand. The LACKEYS start towards gate.*]

Prince. [*Waving.*] Come back and bring Carl.

Princess. [*Waving.*] Yes, come back with Carl.

Greta. [*Kissing her hands.*] Good-bye! Good-bye!

[*The LACKEYS lift their arms in salute. GRETA kisses her hands, the PRINCE and PRINCESS wave, the curtain falls.*]

ACT III.

SCENE: A small clearing in a forest. Right, left, and back are painted scenes of trees. Right centre is a rough bed of boughs. Right down stage, apparently nailed up against a tree, is a bird-cage containing stuffed birds. Back centre a bonfire lights the scene. Over the fire hangs a cauldron, and on either side of the fire are spits on which hares are seen roasting. The woods have a gloomy appearance. It is dusk of a late fall day.

Greta is seen standing in the chariot, left, peering through the trees. She is dressed as at end of Act II. Her clothes look worn, the chariot is dusty, the lackeys have lost part of their finery.

Greta. Oh, goody, goody ; a bonfire ! [*Clapping her hands.*] Now we'll get warm ! [*She shivers and draws her cloak about her.*]

First Lackey. [*Holding up his hand.*] Hush !

Second Lackey. Come back. [*He pushes the chariot backwards.*]

Greta. [*Still standing.*] No, no, we must go on. It was this way the people saw the Snow Queen take Carl !

[*The LACKEYS listen intently.*]

Greta. What do you hear ? [*She steps out and looks about anxiously. The LACKEYS follow her timidly. Several fierce-looking men come out from among the trees (back), and group themselves about the fire. All have long dark*

beards. Knives and pistols are stuck in their belts. All swagger as they walk. The first man takes a box of dice from his pocket, and sits throwing dice. Two others join him; all three become absorbed. Two more play cards, and seem to be quarrelling. Another wraps himself in a red blanket, and lies before the fire. As they seat themselves, an enormous woman, with dark dishevelled hair, heavy dark eye-brows, a knife stuck in her belt, appears (back) and comes towards the fire. She carries a hare which she puts in the cauldron, turning others on spits. A little dark-haired girl, the age of GRETA, follows her. She seats herself on the ground, near the trees left.]

Greta. [Looking at the group wonderingly, whispering.] I'll go ask them if they have seen Carl.

First Lackey. [Motioning towards group terrified.] No, no, don't you see they're robbers!

Second Lackey. [Terrified.] They'll kill us. Come!

[As they speak, the ROBBER GIRL starts up, and creeps stealthily behind the trees. Another ROBBER comes from among the trees, back left. He glances at the card players, then stands listening.]

First Lackey. [Going to GRETA.] Quick, we must go back!

Greta. No, no. We must go on to look for Carl.

[The LACKEYS take GRETA'S hands and draw her back.]

Robber Girl. [*Running towards them.*] Ho, ho !
I heard you ! [*She sees the chariot.*] My ! [*She
snatches cake from the chariot, and stuffs her
mouth, and then rushes towards ROBBER who stands
listening.*]

Robber Girl. [*Shouting.*] See here ! See here !
[*She points excitedly and runs back behind the trees.
The ROBBER follows her. The ROBBERS before
the fire glance up, but continue dice and
cards. The LACKEYS draw GRETA into the
chariot, and run with it towards the trees
left back.*]

Robber Girl. [*Running after the chariot, shouting.*]
Stop ! Stop, I say !

[*She rushes at GRETA and drags her out, whirling
about with her, laughing shrilly. The LACKEYS
run swiftly, and hide behind the trees. GRETA
tries to free herself.*]

Robber. [*Looking at the chariot.*] Gold ! [*He
seizes the chariot and draws it towards the fire.*]

First Dice Player. [*Looking up and seeing the
chariot.*] Gold ! Look at the plunder !

[*He rushes towards the chariot. The other ROBBERS
turn, see it, and jostle each other as they run.
They are seen drawing it before fire, pushing
each other aside. They appear to be quarrelling,
as they sack it and eat. The LACKEYS peep
out, then rush towards GRETA, and try to
draw her towards the trees, back.*]

Robber Girl. [*Clutching GRETA.*] No, you don't,
no, you don't. Ah, ha ! You, cowards. [*Pulling*

GRETA *away from the LACKEYS, shouting.*] Look here ! Look here !

[GRETA *tries violently to free herself. At the call of the ROBBER GIRL, the first ROBBER and the first and second CARD PLAYERS run to her.*]

First Robber. [Rushing at the LACKEYS, gun pointed, shouting.] I'll brain you !

[The LACKEYS *clutch each other in terror, each trying to hide behind the other.*]

First Card Player. Ah, the blooming cowards !

[He *draws out his knife.*]

Second Card Player. The bloody villains !

[He *draws out his knife, and rushes at the LACKEYS. The LACKEYS still clutching each other, turn and run.*]

First Robber. [His gun pointed.] Stop ! Stop !

[The LACKEYS *stop in terror.*]

Greta. [Running forward.] Oh, please, don't hurt them !

[She *runs between the gun and the LACKEYS. The First ROBBER points his gun at GRETA.*]

Robber Girl. [Pushing GRETA aside.] Ninny !

[She *draws her back. The LACKEYS flee through the trees, left back.*]

First Robber. Ah, the cowards !

[He pursues them, gun pointed, off scene.]

Second Card Player. [Holding his hands on his hips, laughing.] Ha! ha! Flighty Jim'll catch them!

Second Card Player. Ha! ha! Flighty Jim'll nail the pretty birds!

[The two ROBBERS go laughing back towards the chariot and sack it. All the ROBBERS are seen eating, jeering, some seated before the fire, others standing. The ROBBER WOMAN is seen seated with a large ham on her lap. She cuts thick slices from it, and seems to be eating fast, scowling.]

Greta. [Running to the ROBBER GIRL.] Oh, will he hurt them, will he? Do stop him! How shall I go now for Carl?

Robber Girl. [Hopping about, jeering.] You shan't go! You shall stay! Oh, ho! You're afraid! *[She dances about GRETA.]* You shall give me your pretty cap, and your dress, and your nice soft muff. *[She takes the muff, and rubs it against her face.]*

Greta. I must go to look for Carl!

Robber Girl. [Stamping.] I say you shall—you shall stop and play with me! You shall ride me in the chariot! *[She turns to the chariot and drags it towards front. As the ROBBER GIRL seizes the chariot, the ROBBER WOMAN turns.]*

Robber Woman. Stop! What's this! [*She seizes GRETA.*] Oh, ho!

[*GRETA shrinks back.*]

Robber Girl. [*Running up.*] She shall stop. [*Stamping.*] She shall!

Robber Woman. [*Feeling GRETA and grinning.*] Why, she's all stuffed with sugar-plums. Ah, ha! She'll taste good! She's tender as a young lamb!

[*GRETA struggles to free herself. The ROBBER GIRL is seen stealthily creeping up behind her mother; suddenly seizing her, throwing her arms about her and biting savagely.*]

Robber Girl. Let her go!

Robber Woman. Stop it! Ow, let go, you cub!
[*She circles about wildly, trying to free herself. GRETA runs to left front. The ROBBERS turn, laugh, and clap their hands.*]

First Robber. Keep it up, little 'un, keep it up!

Second Robber. She's a good 'un, she is!

Third Robber. See how she makes the old 'un spin!

Robber Woman. Let go! You, wild cat!

Robber Girl. Then give me the knife! [*She seizes the knife, and runs to GRETA throwing her arms about her.*] You shan't hurt her. [*Stamping.*] You shan't. She's mine! [*Holding GRETA tight.*] They shan't hurt you. Nobody shall! [*She puts her arms around GRETA'S neck.*]

First Robber. [*Laughing.*] Good for you, little 'un! So they shan't! She's yours!

Robber Woman. [*Turning back, grumbling.*] That imp a' mine!

[*The ROBBERS laugh and turn back to the fire, sitting about, eating, again playing dice and cards. GRETA watches them.*]

Robber Girl. Don't be frightened. They won't touch you. Come and play! [*She jumps into chariot.*] Come and draw me! [*GRETA looks at the ROBBERS fascinated, and glances anxiously towards the woods.*]

Robber Girl. [*Stamping her foot.*] Come draw me, I say!

Greta. [*Takes hold of shafts timidly, drawing the chariot forward.*]

Robber Girl. [*Stamping.*] Faster!

[*GRETA runs with the chariot towards front.*]

Robber Girl. [*Laughing, clapping her hands.*] Stop now. [*Motioning GRETA beside her.*] Come sit here! Tell me who you are?

[*She makes room for GRETA who climbs timidly into the chariot and sits by the ROBBER GIRL.*]

Robber Girl. What a pretty dress! [*Feeling the dress.*] You shall give it to me. Where do you come from? You must be a princess.

Greta. [*Shaking her head.*] Oh, no, I'm just Greta.

Robber Girl. Then where did you get the golden chariot ?

Greta. The princess gave it to me to go and look for Carl. [*Wiping her eyes.*] And now the lackeys are gone. Oh ! I hope he won't hurt them ! How shall I get there ? I don't know the way.

Robber Girl. [*Looking at GRETA curiously.*] Why do you want to look for Carl ?

Greta. [*Astonished.*] He's my brother ! Oh, poor Carl. [*She sobs in her hands.*]

Robber Girl. And you came all alone to look for him ?

[*GRETA nods.*]

Robber Girl. Weren't you afraid ?

Greta. Oh ! yes, but I must go. [*Rises.*]

Robber Girl. [*Holding her back.*] No, no, they won't let you ; wait !

[*GRETA sits down looking frightened.*]

Robber Girl. Where did Carl go ?

Greta. The Snow Queen took him to her palace, over woods and hills. [*Looking about.*] These are the woods. [*She shivers.*] Oh, haven't you seen Carl ?

Robber Girl. [*Looking thoughtful.*] Come tell me more about him. [*She jumps out of the chariot and draws GRETA to left front. GRETA goes with*

her timidly but suddenly starts back as they meet the FIRST ROBBER who comes from the trees, back. GRETA runs towards front centre.]

Robber Girl. [Clapping her hands and dancing about him.] Where are they? Ha! ha! You lost them!

[She skips about him teasingly. The ROBBER frowns and goes towards the fire.]

Robber Girl. [Laughing, puts her arm about GRETA.] Come. [She draws her toward the bird cage.]

Greta. [Whispering.] Did they get away, did they? Oh, goody, goody!

[She claps her hands softly. The ROBBER GIRL seats herself under the bird cage, and draws GRETA down beside her. They are seen talking. The ROBBERS look up laughing as the FIRST ROBBER approaches the fire.]

First Dice Player. Where are the pretty birds? Did they give you the slip?

Second Dice Player. [Laughing.] So the spindle legs out-ran flighty Jim!

First Robber. [Disdainfully.] Ha, those! Got this! [He holds up a purse.] Saw Reddy Jack! [Lays purse beside him.]

First Dice Player. [Excited.] Reddy Jack!

[All the ROBBERS turn towards him eagerly.]

Second Dice Player. What's on to-night ?

First Robber. We're to meet at the pond.

First Dice Player. Oh, ho ! [*Rises.*]

[*All the ROBBERS rise, look excited, and gather about the FIRST ROBBER. The FIRST CARD PLAYER, as others turn away, seizes the purse.*]

First Robber. [*Snatching it.*] No, you don't, you snorting rascal ! [*He knocks him down.*]

Robber Woman. [*Seizing the purse.*] Here, let me have it ! [*She turns back to the fire counting the money.*]

First Card Player. [*Rising, rubbing his head.*] I'll break your skull !

Second Dice Player. I say, what's doing ? Where do we go ?

First Robber. To sack the castle. The swaggering dudes, we'll give them a twist !

Second Dice Player. Zounds ! yes ! We'll make a night of it ! Give us a snack of something hot, old 'un, to stay us.

[*The ROBBER WOMAN fills wooden plates from the cauldron, putting in wooden spoons, and hands them about. The ROBBERS eat.*]

First Robber. We're to be on hand when Reddy Jack gives the signal.

First Card Player. Ah, ha! [*Fills his rifle. All the ROBBERS fill their rifles.*]

Robber Girl. [*Drawing GRETA to right front, whispering loudly.*] You hear, they're going in the woods. When they're gone, you watch. I know where the Snow Queen lives!

Greta. Oh, do you? [*She clings to the ROBBER GIRL, looking at her anxiously.*]

Robber Girl. Yes, hush! they'll hear you. I know, because Bah told me.

Greta. Bah?

Robber Girl. Yes, my reindeer. He was born there. He knows the way.

Greta. [*Clapping her hands.*] Oh! goody!

Robber Girl. Hush, they'll hear you. If you try to get away they'll kill you.

[GRETA clutches the ROBBER GIRL.]

Robber Girl. But they shan't. [*Stamps her foot.*] Not even if I'm angry, they shan't! I'll do it myself then!

Greta. [*Shrinking away covering her face.*] Oh! I wish grandmother were here! [*Sobs.*]

Robber Girl. [*Opening her eyes wide, throwing her arms about GRETA.*] No, no, nobody shall; not even if I'm angry. You weren't afraid? You came all alone to look for Carl!

[The two little girls put their arms about each other's necks.]

Greta. *[Whispering.]* I'll love you, if you help me to find Carl!

Robber Girl. *[Whispering.]* Come and play now. Then they won't know we heard. We'll find which way they go. *[Aloud.]* See my pigeons! *[She rushes to the bird cage seizing a pigeon by the feet and flapping it in GRETA'S face.]*

Robber Girl. Kiss him! kiss him!

[GRETA shrinks back.]

Robber Girl. *[Pursuing her.]* Kiss him!

The ROBBERS look on and laugh. Once more they seat themselves before the fire, evidently listening for a signal. Some are eating, others sharpening their knives or fastening their belts.]

Robber Woman. *[Turning with two plates.]* Come, little cabbage. Here's your supper. *[Glaring at GRETA.]* Here's her's.

[GRETA shrinks back.]

Robber Woman. Let her eat. It'll make her fat. *[Grinning.]* The little lamb!

[The ROBBER GIRL takes the plate to GRETA.]

Robber Girl. Come sit here.

[*They seat themselves front centre. GRETA tries to eat. The ROBBER GIRL, eats fast and at same time watches the ROBBERS.*]

Robber Girl. [*Whispering.*] They'll go soon now, then mother'll go to sleep.

[*The WOMAN looks towards the CHILDREN, and the ROBBER GIRL again bends over her plate, pretending to eat.*]

Greta. [*Moving closer.*] Tell me what it's like where the Snow Queen lives.

Robber Girl. There are great snow mountains and fields of ice and snow. It's bitter, shivering cold. Shan't you be afraid?

Greta. Oh, poor Carl. How cold he must be!
[*Moving closer.*] But Bah knows the way.

Robber Girl. Yes, hush! listen!

[*She raises her hand, a low whistle is heard. The ROBBERS turn and listen. The FIRST ROBBER goes to the trees, back. The other ROBBERS are seen gesticulating and whispering. The ROBBER GIRL steals up close and stands listening.*]

Second Dice Player. [*Turning and seeing the ROBBER GIRL, stamping.*] What are you doing here? Out with you, you baggage!

[*The ROBBER GIRL laughs shrilly, and slyly steals the purse from the ROBBER WOMAN, waving it over her head.*]

Robber Woman. [Seeing her, seizes the purse.]
Give it here! Out with you. To bed, you wild
cat!

[The ROBBER GIRL again laughs loudly. She seizes
her mother's knife, holds it up laughing, runs
to GRETA still laughing, throws one arm about
GRETA, holding the knife in her other hand,
and draws GRETA up on the bed.]

Robber Girl. [Whispering.] Now come; pretend
you're asleep!

Greta. [Shrinking away.] Do you always sleep
with your knife?

Robber Girl. Yes. You never know what'll
happen. Lie still!

[GRETA moves as far away as she can. Both
children lie still pretending to sleep. A sharp
whistle is heard. GRETA starts up.]

Robber Girl. [Drawing her back, in a loud whisper.]
Lie still!

[GRETA lies down. The forest has grown darker.
The moon rises. The stage is lighted, though
giving the appearance of night.]

First Robber. [Hurrying to the fire.] Here's
Reddy Jack; quick! [He lights his torch at the
fire. All the ROBBERS follow the FIRST ROBBER
towards the trees, left front. As they pass the
children, the light of the torch falls on the bed,
showing both little girls lying apparently in deep

sleep. They pass silently, single file, through the trees off scene.]

Greta. [Rising.] They're gone.

Robber Girl. [Drawing her back.] Lie still!

[The ROBBER WOMAN looks at the children. She goes close to the bed carrying a red blanket. GRETA moves slightly. The ROBBER GIRL seizes her, holding her quiet.] The ROBBER WOMAN moves her hands as if about to seize GRETA; then looks at the ROBBER GIRL and shakes her head.]

Robber Woman. [Muttering.] She wants her, my young wild cat. I'll wait.

[She covers the ROBBER GIRL carefully with the blanket, then goes back to the fire, seating herself with her back to the children, stirring the fire.]

Robber Girl. [Whispering.] Now she'll sleep.

[Both children lie still watching her. All conversation between them is now in loud whispers, with glances towards the ROBBER WOMAN.]

The ROBBER WOMAN wraps herself in a red blanket and lies down before the fire, still with her back to the children. She rolls over; then appears to be in deep sleep.]

Robber Girl. [Sitting up listening.] She's asleep. [She listens an instant, then holds up her hand. A bird over-head is heard singing softly.]

Greta. [*Starts up.*] What's that ?

Robber Girl. Hush ! let me hear what he says.

[*GRETA looks at the bird, listening.*]

Greta. [*Puzzled.*] I can't understand what he says.

Robber Girl. [*Excited.*] I can. He's seen Carl !

Greta. [*Wriggling with excitement.*] Oh, where ? where ?

Robber Girl. Hush ! [*She listens, holding up her hand. Again the bird sings.*]

Robber Girl. Here ! It was so cold when the Snow Queen flew over the trees that some of the little birds froze.

Greta. Oh, where did the Snow Queen go ?

[*The bird sings. The ROBBER GIRL sits up listening. The bird ceases singing.*]

Robber Girl. He says Bah knows. A big white bird carried Carl's sled. [*Suddenly throwing her arms about GRETA.*]

Robber Girl. Now you'll find Carl !

Greta. Oh, yes, yes ! [*The two little girls hug each other.*]

Robber Girl. Be still. [*She looks at the ROBBER WOMAN who moves uneasily.*]

Greta. [*Clutching the ROBBER GIRL.*] Is she waking?

[*The children lie back watching her anxiously. Again the ROBBER WOMAN falls back as if sleeping.*]

Robber Girl. [*Crawling softly off the bed.*] Wait, I'll go see.

[*She tiptoes to the ROBBER WOMAN looking at her cautiously, then goes softly back to GRETA.*]

Robber Girl. Yes, she's asleep. Now I'll get Bah; you wait here.

Greta. I'm afraid! *The ROBBER GIRL disappears behind the scenes right back. The ROBBER WOMAN turns and mutters in her sleep.*]

Robber Woman. The fat lamb!

[*GRETA shrinks back, and pulls the blanket over her face. The ROBBER WOMAN lies still, breathing heavily. GRETA looks at her, and cautiously creeps to the edge of the bed.*]

Greta. [*Murmuring.*] Oh, I wish she'd come with Bah. [*She covers her face with her hands. The*

WOMAN *appears to sleep quietly.* GRETA *hastily slips off the bed, running to the trees, left front, partly hiding behind them.* The ROBBER GIRL *comes out from behind the trees leading a REINDEER. She leads him to front centre talking in a low voice.*]

Robber Girl. You hear, you are to take the little girl to the Snow Queen. [*The REINDEER nods solemnly. You know where it is: you were born there, you ought to!* [*The REINDEER nods.*] And you'll take good care of Greta?

[*The REINDEER nods low. GRETA sees the ROBBER GIRL, and tiptoes to her.*]

Robber Girl. Here's Bah, old Bah. [*She draws her knife under his throat. The DEER starts.*] Ha! ha! [*She laughs softly and noiselessly claps her hands.*] I'll miss tickling you with my knife, Bah! Well, jump on! [*She helps GRETA up on the DEER. GRETA sits holding the reins and looks anxiously toward the ROBBER WOMAN.*]

Robber Girl. We must be quick, but wait!

[*She runs softly to the fire and returns with a ham, a loaf of bread and an enormous pair of gloves.*]

Robber Girl. See, this is for you to eat on the way. [*She ties the ham and bread to the DEER.*]

Greta. Does he know the way ?

[BAH nods.]

Greta. [*Softly clapping her hands.*] Oh ! I'm so glad ! Good Bah ! [*She strokes the DEER putting her arms about his neck.*]

Robber Girl. [*Whispering.*] Now off with you, quick !

[GRETA gathers the reins, but suddenly stoops, throwing her arms about the ROBBER GIRL'S neck.]

Greta. Come too ! It is so dark here in the woods. [*She shivers.*] Grandmother'll love you ; so'll Carl ! [*She kisses the ROBBER GIRL.*]

Robber Girl. Don't ! You tickle ! [*She starts back rubbing her face.*] Ho ! ho ! I will. I shan't stop here. Come I'll lead you. [*She takes the reins.*]

Greta. Oh ! look ! [*She points to the WOMAN who sits up in her sleep.*]

Robber Girl. [*Drawing her knife, whispers.*] Run, Bah, if she comes I'll stop her.

[*She stands guard beside the DEER holding out her knife.*]

Greta. [*Whispering.*] Quick, Bah, for Carl.

[*The DEER starts right down stage. The ROBBER GIRL runs a few steps beside him, looking back and holding out her knife. GRETA clasps her arms about BAH'S neck as he runs, looking back frightened towards the ROBBER WOMAN. The curtain falls.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE: Right and left are painted scenes representing ice mountains. Back, the Snow Queen's Palace, a painted scene representing a huge ice palace. In the centre of the palace is a large door, closed. Above it is an open window. Down stage right is a red bush. When the curtain rises, the ice palace is concealed by a heavy snow storm.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Greta, barefoot, her clothes ragged, is seated on the deer, down stage left. There is a high wind. The snow beats against her in enormous flakes.

Greta. On, Bah. The people said it was straight ahead to the Snow Queen's Palace. [*She glances back, then looks anxiously before her.*] Poor Bah, you can't see in the snow.

[*She wipes the snow from his eyes. As she leans over him a fierce gust of wind blows against her. She clutches the DEER wildly, her hair flying. The DEER stands with his feet apart bracing himself.*]

Greta. Wait Bah, I'll lead you. [*She slips from the DEER'S back to the ground, still holding the bridle.*] Oh, how cold it is! [*She lifts her feet painfully.*] My feet hurt so!

[She holds her bare foot in her hand, and rubs her other hand over her eyes, sitting in the snow, looking up at the DEER pitifully. The DEER licks her feet and hands.]

Greta. *[Stroking the DEER'S face.]* Thank you Bah, that makes them warmer. *[Rising hastily.]* But they said we must hurry else the Snow Queen would get back and keep Carl. *[She takes the bridle and struggles a few steps forward but slips down.]* *[Looking up at BAH.]* I can't walk ! Oh, what shall I do ?

[The DEER bends over her.]

Greta. *[Putting her arms around his neck.]* You're so tired, poor Bah, and I'll have to ride you.

[The DEER stoops over GRETA and she climbs painfully up on his back. GRETA sits holding on firmly, white with snow. She looks straight ahead thinking.]

Greta. On, Bah ! It can't be far now. Oh, I wish you could talk, Bah !

[The DEER shakes his head and struggles forward. A heavy gust of wind and huge snow-flakes blow in GRETA'S face. She looses her hold and falls to the ground ; partly rises ; is pressed back by the wind and snow ; again struggles to stand but falls.]

Greta. *[Looking up.]* I can't go on Bah, I can't !

[BAH moves closer to GRETA and bends over her as if trying to shield her from the snow.]

Greta. Oh, poor Carl! [She sobs, her head on her knees. A faint light is seen through the snow and a distinct tinkle of bells is heard. GRETA turns, listening intently.]

Greta. [Grasping BAH'S reins.] Bah, did you hear? It's the Snow Queen! [She struggles to her feet and stands looking at the light.] Oh! Bah, she's coming! [She struggles to climb up on the DEER, and again Bah stoops.]

Greta. [Seating herself on the DEER.] On! Bah! [She grasps the reins; again the bells are heard somewhat more distinctly.]

Greta. [Clasping her arms about Bah's neck and looking back.] Quick, Bah, quick!

[The DEER moves forward. The wind still pushes him back, but he goes resolutely on. GRETA, as she clings to him, continues looking anxiously back. The light fades. As they approach down stage right, gradually the snowfall grows less.]

Greta. They said I was to leave you at the red bush, Bah. [Looking before her, shielding her eyes with her hands.] Here it is! [Pointing, looking joyous.] Don't you see, Bah? Look!

[Down stage right the red bush is now seen.]

Greta. *[Eagerly.]* We must be close to the Palace! Bah, I see the Palace now. There it is! There it is!

[As GRETA points excitedly, the snow slowly ceases, and the ice palace and ice mountains are clearly seen.]

Greta. *[Looking amazed.]* Oh, how big it is, Bah! How cold it must be, all ice, and those great ice mountains! Poor Carl must be all frozen. How still it is! Oh! I'm afraid!

[She puts her arm about BAH'S neck looking about. A tinkle of sleigh-bells is heard as if in the distance.]

Greta. *[Startled.]* Bah!

[The DEER stands listening.]

Greta. She's coming! I must hurry! You wait here, Bah.

[The DEER remains standing by the red bush down stage right. He appears to notice what happens, looks about and listens, but keeps the same place until GRETA returns to him. GRETA runs a few steps forward, then stands looking about cautiously. She looks at the ice-mountains on either side, shivering, steps back,

then goes on. Approaching the ice-palace she stands looking at it timidly an instant, listens, then walks nearer.]

Greta. [Standing before the palace calling softly.] Carl, Carl, Oh! Carl! [She listens, then walks back looking up, calling more loudly.] Carl, its Greta! I'm here, Carl! [She listens again and hears nothing. Turning away]. Oh, dear! he doesn't hear me. How can I make him hear?

[As GRETA speaks, CARL is seen at the upper window. He moves rigidly as a person walking in his sleep. He looks out, his eyes wide, but apparently unseeing; his expression is dreamy and vacant. His clothes are white; his face and hands are blue with cold.]

GRETA walks up and down before the palace, she notices the door in the centre and presses against it.]

Greta. [Stepping back and blowing her hands.] It's icy! How cold it must be in there! Poor Carl!

[She pushes the door again and it refuses to open. A sharp wind blows before the palace; and GRETA draws her cloak about her shivering. She steps back, her hands clasped looking at the door, calling.]

Greta. Carl! Carl! Oh, Carl! [Wringing her

hands.] Oh, what shall I do? [*She steps back looking up at the house anxiously, then sees CARL.*]

Greta. [*Arms extended, running closer, calling excitedly.*] Carl! Carl!

[*CARL stands unmoved, apparently unconscious of GRETA.*]

Greta. [*Moving nearer and raising her arms.*] Carl! Don't you see me, Carl? Don't you hear? It's Greta! Come down, Carl!

[*CARL stares before him unheeding.*]

Greta. [*Stepping back clasping her hands.*] He doesn't hear me! [*She steps back looking up at CARL.*] Carl! Why, he is all blue! He must, be frozen! Carl! [*She runs closer.*] He's asleep. [*Calling loudly.*] Oh! Carl!

[*She runs to the door and pounds at it frantically, then steps back and looks up at CARL appealingly, her arms extended. Suddenly she drops her arms and turns away from the palace covering her face with her hands, sobbing.*]

Greta. [*Looking before her.*] It's the glass in his eye! He doesn't know me. Oh, what would grandmother do? [*She turns back and stands looking up at CARL.*] He'll remember, may-be,

if I sing. [*Holding up her arms and singing softly at first, her voice growing louder.*]

“The Fir and Pine, the Fir and Pine,
Are fresh and green for ever. . . .”

[*As GRETA sings, CARL moves and looks down, but appears not to recognize GRETA.*]

Greta. [*Joyfully.*] Carl hears me ! He hears me now ! [*Singing loudly, her arms still extended.*]

“The Fir and Pine, the Fir and Pine,
I love them always dearly,
Not only in the summer time,
But mid the winter’s frost and rime.”

[*CARL moves away from the window.*]

Greta. He’s coming ! he’s coming ! [*Holding out her arms.*] Carl ! Carl !

[*The door opens slowly. GRETA stands watching breathlessly. CARL steps out, but still stands rigid, his eyes unseeing, as if asleep.*]

Greta. [*Running to him, arms outstretched.*] Carl !

[*She throws her arms about him, holding him close. CARL stands, his arms at his sides, staring vacantly before him.*]

Greta. [*Shrinking back and looking at CARL wondering.*] Carl, are you asleep ?

[Suddenly she runs to him, sobbing on his shoulder.
CARL moves, clasping his hand over his heart.
GRETA looks up at him eagerly.]

Carl. [Dully.] It hurts here.

Greta. [Clapping her hands.] He's waking! It must be the glass coming out of his heart! [Going nearer and holding her face up to CARL'S.] See Carl, it's I, Greta, come to take you home. [Troubled.] Don't you know me now, Carl? Oh, dear, it's the glass in his eye! He's all cold yet. He can't remember. Listen, Carl [Taking CARL'S hands, kneeling before him, looking up at him, and singing softly.]

“The Fir and Pine, the Fir and Pine,
I love them always dearly . . .”

[As she sings, CARL gradually moves closer, leaning against GRETA, looking down at her.]

Greta. [Excited and singing more loudly.]

“Not only in the summer time,
But mid the winter's frost and rime.
How oft to me on Christmas night . . .”

[Suddenly CARL covers his face with his hands, sobbing violently.]

Greta. [Jumping up frightened.] What is it?
[She throws her arms about CARL. CARL still sobbing rubs his hand over his eyes, then holds his hand out, appearing dazed.]

Greta. What is it, Carl? [*She looks, then dances about him, clapping her hands.*] Oh! Carl, look! Look! It's the glass! It's out of your eye! It came out when you cried. Oh! Goody! Goody! Carl, look! You'll know me now!

[*She holds her face close to his. CARL looks at her earnestly, coming closer. Suddenly he throws his arms about her neck, calling out.*]

Carl. Greta!

[*The children cling to each other.*]

Greta. [*Crying on CARL'S shoulder.*] Oh, Carl, how glad I am to find you! How glad I am, Carl!

Carl. [*Moving off and holding his hand over his heart.*] Oh! it hurts!

Greta. [*Startled.*] What?

Carl. Something hurt here . . . now it has stopped.

Greta. [*Hopping about him again.*] It's the glass in your heart! Now that's gone too! [*Running to CARL and taking his hands.*] Quick Carl, now we'll go home!

Carl. [*Looking about, wondering.*] Where are we?

Greta. At the Snow Queen's Palace. We must go!

[CARL looks about bewildered, and shivers.]

Carl. How cold it is, Greta !

Greta. [*Chafing his hands.*] Yes, don't you remember, Carl, the Snow Queen brought you here ?

[CARL shakes his head.]

Greta. In her sled all white and shining.

[CARL looks puzzled.]

Greta. [*Anxiously.*] Can't you remember, Carl ? On Christmas Eve ! Listen ! [*Singing.*]

“How oft to me on Christmas night.
The Fir and Pine have brought delight.”

Carl. [*Excited.*] Oh, yes, now, I remember ! [*Jumping up and down.*] She called me ! And she kissed me, and I fell asleep. [*Wonderingly.*] Have I been asleep all this long time ? [*Looking about and shivering.*] Where've you been, Greta ?

Greta. Looking for you. And grandmother's at home waiting. Oh, Carl it's summer at home ! I know grandmother's just waiting.

Carl. [*Running to GRETA and holding her arm.*] Let's go home !

Greta. Yes. Quick ! If the Snow Queen comes, she won't let us ! [*Takes his hand and starts forward.*]

Carl. But how shall we go ?

Greta. My reindeer'll take us. Bah, don't you see? [*Pointing eagerly.*]

Carl. Yes! [*Hops up and down.*] Yes!

[*They run, GRETA ahead. Again snow falls thickly in enormous flakes. The wind blows against them pushing them back. A light appears through the snow over left back.*]

Carl. [*Gasping.*] I can't see, Greta.

Greta. [*Turning back.*] You must. [*As she glances back, GRETA notices the light and looks at it terrified.*] Carl! [*She points to the light. Sleigh bells are heard. The children clutch each other.*] Quick, Carl!

[*Again they start forward running against wind and snow, GRETA ahead. Sleigh bells are distinctly heard. A voice is heard overhead very clear and high.*]

Voice. On! On!

Carl. [*Agonized.*] She's here, Greta! She's here!

[*He leaps forward towards where BAH still stands, right front, and falls headlong in the snow.*]

Greta. Oh! Carl! [*She tries to help CARL, up calling in a loud voice.*] Come, Bah.

Voice. [*Overhead.*] Gallop! Gallop!

[BAH *pushes through the snow towards the children,*
CARL *struggles to his feet looking towards*
the light.]

Greta. [*Jumping on BAH and reaching her hands*
down.] Quick, Carl, quick!

Voice. Steady, down!

[CARL *leaps up, jumping on the DEER, and throwing*
his arms about GRETA. As GRETA gathers the
reins, the snow partly clears, and the sleigh of
the SNOW QUEEN is seen on the ground, left
back, very shining, snow still falling thinly
about it. The QUEEN stands in the sleigh,
dressed as in First Act, whip in hand.]

Queen [*Looking anxiously towards the palace,*
leaning over and lashing bears.] On! On!

Greta. [*Her arm about the DEER.*] Home, Bah,
Home!

[BAH *runs across the stage, past the SNOW QUEEN,*
and disappears into scenes, left front. The
curtain falls.]

ACT IV. SCENE II.

A painted drop across the back of the stage, represents: right, the village church; centre, grandmother's house; left, village houses. Flowers before grandmother's house represent a garden; on either side of the door are the rose-trees in tubs. Right and left are painted scenes of trees, allowing exits. A green floor cloth representing grass covers the stage.

As the curtain rises, Grandmother is seen before her house, back centre, watering the flowers. She is dressed as in Act I. She puts down the watering can, appears to listen, rubs her apron over her eyes, and again bends over the flowers. Greta and Carl are seen approaching, left down stage, Greta on Bah, Carl leading. Both children are dusty; Bah is weary.

Carl. [Jumping up and down excitedly, pointing.]
There's grandmother, Greta. Oh, Greta, see! see!

Greta. Hush! [Holding up her hand whispering.]
Wait! You'll scare her!

[She slips quickly off the DEER, excitedly grasping
CARL'S arm.]

Carl. You go first. I'll wait here.
[He runs behind the trees, peeping out impatiently.
GRETA hurries softly towards the house. BAH
looks after her, then stoops over, apparently
nibbling grass. GRANDMOTHER hears the sound
and half turns. GRETA stands back looking
at her eagerly, her arms extended.]

Grand. [*Glancing out towards front, shielding her eyes with her hand. Murmuring.*] No, no. Not yet.

[*She shakes her head and again wipes her eyes with her apron, turning back.*]

Greta. [*Running forward, arms still extended.*] Yes, grandmother, yes, don't cry! I'm home! I'm home!

Grand. [*Turning swiftly.*] Greta!

[*She seizes GRETA, holding her close, laughing and at the same time wiping her eyes. CARL steals out from trees and runs up softly behind her.*]

Grand. [*Loosening GRETA.*] But Carl! Where's Carl?

[*CARL quickly clasps his hands over GRANDMOTHER'S eyes.*]

Grand. [*Turning.*] Carl!

[*She clasps him in her arms, GRETA clings to her.*]

Annchen. [*Running out from among trees left, seeing GRETA.*] Greta! [*She runs towards GRETA, but turns back, shouting. Greta's home! Carl's home! Greta's come!*]

Children's voices. [*Heard calling.*] Carl's home, come quick, here's Greta!

[*As they shout, the children are seen streaming out from among the trees on both sides of stage. The boys are dressed as before, the girls with aprons over summer dresses. GRETA and CARL run*

to meet them. GRETA is seen hugging ANNCHEN and CLARA, the bigger girls gathering about them. The boys push CARL about admiringly. GRETA and CARL free themselves, and run back to GRANDMOTHER, clinging to her. The children follow. The church bells play a merry tune.]

Annchen. [Hopping about GRETA, clapping her hands, shouting.] They're ringing for Greta! They're ringing for Greta!

Boys. No! They're ringing for Carl!

[GRETA and CARL look up at GRANDMOTHER laughing; GRANDMOTHER smiles and holds both children close. The children suddenly circle about GRETA and CARL, clapping their hands, dancing in time to chimes, shouting.]

Children. Greta! Carl! Greta! Carl!

[As children prance about, GRANDMOTHER smiling, GRETA and CARL looking up at her laughing, the curtain falls.]

THE END.



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